THE MULTI-ACTOR APPROACH (MAA) IN HORIZON EUROPE

COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR REAL-LIFE PROBLEMS

To ensure that the solutions are practical, relevant, and effective, Horizon Europe requires the Multi-Actor Approach (MAA).
The goal of the MAA in Horizon projects is to bring together people from science, practice, or anyone who can contribute to tackling a real-life problem by collaborating from the very start. The aim is to create solutions that are co-developed and co-owned by those who will ultimately benefit from them—end-users who are to use the solutions in their everyday work to overcome challenges and problems—ensuring they meet real needs and can be easily implemented.

In MAA projects the planning and preparation phase are crucial to ensure a cooperative and deliverable consortium.

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7 PRINCIPLES OF MULTI-ACTOR APPROACH

CLEAR OBJECTIVES, RELEVANCE TO USERS' NEEDS AND SHARED UNDERSTANDING

Proposals must demonstrate how the project's objectives and planned activities address the concrete needs, problems, or opportunities of (end-)users of the results. A common understanding of the purpose and value of the cooperation must be established, ensuring clarity on what is to be achieved and how all partners benefit.

TRUST, EQUITY, AND BALANCED EXPECTATIONS

Projects must foster trust among partners, ensuring all are capable of delivering, taking responsibility, and cooperating effectively. Equity in contributions is crucial, recognizing each partner's unique circumstances and allocating resources and opportunities fairly. There must also be a clear agreement on balancing expectations, such as for example, fast, practical results versus longer-term scientific research.

BALANCED AND COMPLEMENTARY CONSORTIUM

The project consortium must include a balanced mix of relevant actors, combining scientific expertise, practical experience, and other necessary knowledge. This ensures the inclusion of complementary skills and expertise to deliver results that are broadly applicable and address real-world needs.

ACTIVE AND INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION FROM START TO FINISH

All participants must be actively involved from the beginning and throughout all stages of the project. Proposals must define the roles and responsibilities of all actors, ensuring their contributions are meaningful. Real involvement ensures collaboration and strengthens the co-ownership of results.

PRACTICAL OUTPUTS AND DISSEMINATION

The project must deliver concrete outputs, such as tools, approaches, or solutions, which are easy to understand, ready to use, and freely accessible. Outputs must be disseminated using channels most relevant to (end-)users.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORTIVE COLLABORATION ENVIRONMENT

Proposals must employ flexible, suitable, and participatory methods or tools to support collaboration among partners. A safe and encouraging environment should be fostered, enabling all participants to share ideas, voice opinions, and ask questions without fear of judgment.

BUILDING ON EXISTING KNOWLEDGE WITH EU-WIDE IMPACT

Proposals must outline how the project will build on existing knowledge, including tacit knowledge and best practices, to create innovative solutions. Projects should involve high-quality knowledge exchange activities and interactive innovation groups, such as EIP-AGRI Operational Groups, where applicable. The results must complement existing research and practices, demonstrating clear added value with a broad European impact.

MAA is applied to Horizon Europe's global challenges in food, natural resources and environment, and it has parallels to similar concepts as open science, responsible research and innovation or transdisciplinary.

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